

Sheboygan & Plymouth Area United Way
Sheboygan Press Column
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By Nancy Jusky

Agencies Collaborate to Find a Home for “Andy”

Sometimes those seeking help find their way to our United Way agencies' doors and “Andy” found his way to Mental Health America one day this fall. “Andy” arrived needing to talk to someone and Bev Randall, executive director of Mental Health America, invited him into her office to hear the rest of his story.

It seems “Andy” was living out of his car and had very little money left. Fall was approaching and with the weather turning cooler, “Andy” had been conserving his available cash for gas so he could run his car occasionally during the night to keep warm.

He was desperate, down and out and he didn't want his life to end on this note.

Health issues and his age had cost him his job and his future employment situation looked very bleak. He wanted to get into low income housing but lacked the knowledge and skills to get him there. Bev listened and assessed the situation, matching him with available programs within the United Way family of agencies addressing his needs – low income health care, food assistance/food pantry and low income housing.

Shelter being the first concern, her first call was to the local Salvation Army which operates the only homeless shelter serving five counties. The shelter was in “overflow mode” but “Andy's” health concerns put him in jeopardy without adequate housing so an appeal was made to Salvation Army to find room for him. They did, but only on a temporary basis and after he passed the necessary health tests.

Bev prayed long and hard for a permanent housing solution for “Andy” – and waited. Her prayers were rewarded with a visit from “Andy” a few weeks later just to say “thank you”, a rarity in the world of non-profits. He had been in the Salvation Army shelter for a week and a half when miraculously an opening occurred at Tamarack House.

“Andy” is rebuilding his life with the resources provided by collaborating United Way agencies and you, our donors, whose support keeps making the system work. We thank you **all** for caring.